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OAXACA, MEXICO

Indian leaders asked the government Thursday to expel the U.S.-based Summer Institute of Linguistics from southern Mexico, charging the group provokes divisions in the Indian community.

An assembly of 34 Indians mayors charged the institute staff clashed with local traditions. The linguistics institute translates the Bible into Indian dialects and promotes the study of Indian languages.

Spokeswomen Marta Colmenares urged the Mexican government to confiscate the institute's property, which she said included small planes, landing strips, radio communications equipment and medical services.

Critics of the organization charge it has links with the CIA, but defenders say it has helped preserve languages that would have been lost and promotes health care.